

18th GENERAL ASSEMBLY FACTS

Date: Tuesday, December 10, 1:30 p.m. to Friday, December 13, 5:00 p.m.

Place: Kowakien Hotel, Hakone

Members: 298 voting delegates plus 185 non-voting delegates

The total of 298 voting delegates includes 268 delegates elected by fourteen districts and 30 delegates selected by the Preparation Committee to include persons representative of various opinions in the Osaka and Tokyo districts, which have not met to elect delegates

Agenda Items: Election of Officers

Election of Executive Committee of 27 members

55 Bills, with major attention being given to issues related to

The Christian Pavilion at Expo '70

Tokyo Union Theological Seminary

Ministerial Qualifications Committee

Format: In the election of the Executive Committee, each delegate will nominate three persons--an attempt to provide for representation of minority opinion in the makeup of the Executive Committee

TWO YEARS BECOME THIRTY-FIVE

It was in December of 1939--just 35 years ago--that the Rev. Chikara Tani arrived in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He had responded to a call for a minister from Japan to give leadership to a group of 25 Christians of Japanese ancestry who wished to organize as a congregation.

Mr. Tani agreed to go for a two-year period with the understanding that return travel would be provided via the Near East to enable him to visit the Holy Land.

But Pearl Harbor intervened and by the end of World War II the Tanis were committed to the Argentina ministry.

This month--for the first time--Mr. Tani, now almost 70, is back in Japan to look for a young minister to assist him and carry on in Buenos Aires when he retires.

The fruits of Mr. Tani's ministry are the central church of the La Iglesia Evangelica Japonesa in La Republica Argentina (Japan Evange-

lical Church in the Republic of Argentina) and nine preaching points serving the scattered Nisei and Sansei community.

It was Pastor Tani who found countless ways to be of service to the Japanese immigrants who during the war suddenly became enemy aliens. It was Pastor Tani's church that became the first headquarters for LARA (Licensed Agencies for Relief in Asia) in Buenos Aires, collecting relief goods for shipment to Japan after the war.

Mr. Tani's ministry has been bilingual--Japanese and Spanish--but his successor will face the challenge of communicating the gospel to third generation young people who know no Japanese.

Mr. Tani is one of 22 Kyodan ministers serving overseas. He was the guest at a reception given by the Kyodan Committee for Ecumenical Ministries. On November 25 leaves for Buenos Aires.

RESUME OF EVENTS AND ISSUES IN RECENT KYODAN HISTORY

by Ian MacLeod

BAMPAKU - Expo '70, Osaka: The ecumenically sponsored Christian Pavilion was made into a hot issue by groups of theological students and younger pastors and laypeople, who repudiated it as a valid evangelistic enterprise on grounds of its wastefully high cost, its lack of meaningful content and its symbolism as expressing tacit approval by the church, through cooperation, with what these groups believe is a chauvinistic government, bent on economic imperialism and remilitarization. This kind of cooperative participation in Expo was seen by them as a repudiation of the peace-advocating Kyodan Confession of Responsibility during World War II.

The specific goal was to persuade the Kyodan to retract Bill 55 of the 1968 General Assembly expressing approval and support for the Pavilion project. Their efforts accelerated into a campaign to force debate of this issue in the Kyodan Executive Committee and the executive committees and assemblies of several districts. The result has been a paralysis of the assemblies in Tokyo, Osaka and Hyogo Districts for five years and the consequent suspension of the Kyodan General Assembly from 1969 to 1973.

16th General Assembly, 1969, was convened to reconsider the Pavilion issue, but ended in a highly confused situation in which dissenting groups, who have since become known as the "Issue Raisers" took over the direction of the assembly and conducted a debate forum with strong-arm tactics that severely polarized the church, by arousing the implacable opposition of those who felt the entire assembly system with its democratic procedures for orderly debate had been roughly trampled on.

TUTS: Tokyo Union Theological Seminary (Toshindai) has figured prominently in the controversy due to the sharp confrontations between radical students and the faculty, each side taking a very hard position and accusing the other of refusal to debate seriously the issues at stake. Occupation of the campus by the radical students from November 1969 to March 1970, suspension of classes, the expulsion of the students by riot police, called in by the president, insistence on re-registration of all students, refusal to register without settling the pending issues and consequent dropping out of seminary by more than 60 students, blocking of entrance examinations by these students, the holding of a professor incommunicado for several hours and a lawsuit against three students have all contributed not only to the breach between faculty and a large segment of the student body, but to the polarization of attitudes in the church at large.

KYOSHI KENTEI IINKAI - Committee on Ministerial Qualifications: A highly unsettled situation has continued since 1969, beginning with the disruption of Ministerial Qualification Examinations by students protesting the grounds on which a candidate from Kwansei Gakuin was refused recommendation, and involving controversy over the use of the Kyodan Confession of Faith as a criterion for admission to the ministry, over the system of requiring three years as a licensed preacher (*hokyoshi*) before ordination, and over the inability of the church to settle the various issues described above. The inability of the Committee to clarify a position in a way such as to gain the support of the church at large has prevented it from holding examinations in 1974. Seventeen candidates who desire ordination are being kept waiting, and 18 others decline taking the examination until the various issues are settled.

17th General Assembly, November 1973, was finally convened through the efforts of a specially appointed Preparations Committee, and incurred much criticism from conservative factions in Tokyo and Osaka Districts in particular, due to the appointment by the Preparations Committee of special delegates to represent these districts, delegates whom these groups insisted were not proper representatives. The Assembly attempted to deal with the Bampaku, TUTS and Kyoshi Kentei issues.

A bill to rescind as a mistake Bill 55 of the 1968 Assembly supporting the Christian Pavilion was tabled for continuing discussion.

A bill calling upon TUTS to withdraw charges against the students was approved but has not been honoured by TUTS itself.

The elections for a new moderator, Isuke Toda, and vice moderator, Ichiro Ono, were successfully completed, but the election of a new Executive Committee broke down over a difference over procedure.

KOZOJI NEW TOWN -- A MICROCOSM OF THE KYODAN

by Walter Baldwin

--the "Kyodan struggle" is not only at the assembly or committee level; in this small 25-member preaching point 15 miles north of Nagoya can be found the commitments, traditions and visions that are the source both of the tensions and of the hope for the Kyodan of the future...

It was inevitable that Kozoji Church would embody in its own life, in a special way, the suffering and tension of this period in the Kyodan. It was established as a preaching point in October, 1969, at the height of the agony of the Vietnam War and the church's consciousness of Japan's deep involvement in it. This kind of conscience had led to the Confession of Responsibility during World War II, then to the special General Assembly to deal with the Expo '70 Pavilion issue and to events culminating in the calling of riot police into Tokyo Union Seminary in March 1970.

Then too, Kozoji New Town, with only the barest essentials of human needs considered in its planning, is, like Expo '70, a result of the high economic growth policy of the Japanese government that has subordinated human needs to economic expansion.

Kozoji Church, soon after it was begun, opposed the Kyodan's participation in the Christian Pavilion of Expo '70; we did not feel it was the kind of evangelism the church is called to participate in.

EXPECTATIONS One reason Mr. Tsunemori Kiyoshima, a licensed pastor, accepted the call to Kozoji in the spring of 1971 was that he discerned from the above action our intention to relate ourselves to important social issues and to the problems of the whole Kyodan.

That fall he decided, along with two other pastors in the Nagoya area, to protest the Kyodan's failure to deal with vital issues by refusing ordination. The issues: 1) the standard of the ordination examination; 2) the standard for interpretation of the Confession of Faith; 3) the two-stage licentiate and ordination system of the Kyodan; 4) the Tokyo Union Theological Seminary problem.

When he announced his position to the church council, he was surprised and

disappointed that they refused to take it up as a church and support him, considering it merely his personal problem.

A CHURCH TURNED OUTWARD Mr. Kiyoshima also had a vision of a church not turned inward but outward in evangelism and service. His vision corresponded to the hope, nurtured from the beginning, of an open church in a community with a great need for our facilities--open for the use of groups serving the community and undertaking projects ourselves with other churches and secular groups. The availability of a loan for this kind of ecumenical koinonia strengthened us in our original purpose. But there has been some resistance on the part of the council, and the fight to carry through lies ahead.

Mr. Kiyoshima believed the pastor of an outward-turned church should set the example by working if possible in a job in society. He would preach and work with seekers, leaving the visitation of members to officers and members. This created a breach, first, between the pastor and the people, who think he should spend full time as a pastor, and, second, between the older missionary pastor, who believes that evangelistic, pastoral nurture and service in the world are the joint responsibility of pastor and people, and that the pastor has to take the leadership in setting the example.

CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE The more tradition-minded officers, instead of moving with the minister toward the new image of the pastor and the church open to serve the world, have tended to react against his position on ordination and to be confirmed in their old image of the pastor as someone whose overriding concern is the nurture of individual members and seekers. Three of the officers are the sons, and one, the daughter, of ministers who assumed this role. (continued on page 4)

In "An Apple Story" in the October 20, 1974 issue of KNL (no. 87), page 3, the number of young men baptized in June of 1874 was *fourteen*, not *eight*, as stated.

Lack of communication finally led to a crisis of confidence through which we have just passed, issuing in a vote of confidence in the pastor coupled with the hope that he will be ordained. We have hope for the future as work on the church building begins in December.

Our tensions here at Kozoji, as with the Kyodan, have little to do with traditional denominational differences. Though

we are a new church, most of our members come from older churches and still retain the traditional individual-centered evangelistic church image. The question is whether the person-centered values of the old image can be retained and yet broadened and deepened to an image more profoundly related to the life of the whole community. As I perceive it, this is the same challenge facing the whole Kyodan and the whole world church in our day.

THOSE WHO WITNESSED THROUGH RESISTANCE

Twenty modern "witnesses for Christ" are featured in a set of four paperbacks just published for junior and senior high school students by the Kyodan Board of Publication.* The aim is to respond to questions young people today are raising about life purpose with accounts of the words and actions of modern Christians who have resisted patterns of discrimination and oppressive government power. The "witnesses":

TADAO YANAIBARA, 1893-1961, Japanese professor who resigned to protest war preparations and promote peace; in postwar became university chancellor

SIMONE WEIL, 1909-1934, French woman who combined faith as a mystic with compassion for the suffering of others and identified with resistance movement against Nazism

SHOZO TANAKA, 1841-1913, Japanese Diet member who raised the issue of the Ashio Mine poisoning and struggled half of his life on behalf of its victims

PAUL SCHNEIDER, 1897-1939, German pastor imprisoned for opposing Nazis, who consoled and encouraged other prisoners before his death in a concentration camp

KIEKO YAMAMURO, 1874-1916, Japanese woman active throughout her life in Salvation Army, WCTU and other movements for women's movements

GIEN KASHIWAGI, 1860-1938, Japanese educator and pastor who gave his life to anti-war activities, continuing to publish his peace paper throughout the war

OCHIMI KUBUSHIRO, 1882-1972, Japanese leader in fight against prostitution who worked for anti-prostitution laws as well as in WCTU and peace movements

D. BONHOEFFER, 1906-1945, German pastor, outspoken critic of Hitler and Nazism and leader of underground movement in World War II, who died in prison

J. HROMADKA, 1889-1968, Czech theologian known for his efforts for ecumenical and peace movements during the rebuilding of the socialist Czechoslovakian state

SENSAKU ASAMI, 1868-1952, Japanese editor arrested and tried several times for anti-war stance and criticism of militarism but always found not guilty

JOTARO KAWAKAMI, 1889-1965, Japanese political leader purged as Labor Party member of wartime government, who later worked to unite Japan Socialist Party

M.L. KING, 1929-1968, Black minister and leader of non-violent movement against racial discrimination in the United States who was awarded Nobel Peace Prize in 1968

MICHI KAWAI, 1877-1953, Japanese founder of Keisen Girls School who throughout the war years refused to abandon Christian education and peace activities

M. M. KOLBE, 1894-1941, Polish priest arrested when Nazis invaded Poland, who died in prison when he offered himself for execution in place of another prisoner

RINZO ONOMURA, 1883-1961, Japanese pastor, seeking to guard church against government power, who was arrested for disloyalty to the Emperor and other charges but freed

KANZO UCHIMURA, 1861-1930, Japanese teacher, preacher, theologian, forced to resign for not honoring Imperial Rescript, who protested Russo-Japanese War in writings

ALICE HERZ, 1882-1965, German-born woman who went to the U.S. in 1933, opposed war, discrimination, atomic testing and set fire to herself to protest Vietnam War

JUNZO AKASHI, 1889-1965, founder of Watch Tower in Japan, who was imprisoned and cruelly tortured for criticizing Emperor and refusing to do military duty

CHU KI CHORU, 1897-1944, who started anti-Shrine worship movement during Japan's rule of Korea, for which he was imprisoned and tortured, dying a martyr's death

MASAHISA SUZUKI, 1912-1969, Japanese pastor who, as Kyodan moderator, in 1967 issued confession of church's responsibility in World War II

**Kirisuto no shonintachi* (Witnesses to Christ). Tokyo: Kyodan Board of Publication, 1974